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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7438
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0545
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1173
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1636
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0359
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-2/REA/NMJIC-J2// PRIORITY
RHMFIS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/HSE/CCJ5// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5/RUE// PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 000622

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: JACKSON-VANIK: NECESSARY STEPS TO CONTINUE WAIVER

REF: STATE 94469

Classified By: Charges d,Affaires Jennifer Brush, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Foreign Minister Rashit Meredov learned during a June 2 meeting with Charge that the GOTX is, once again, in the spotlight for Jackson-Vanik Amendment trade sanctions for violating freedom of movement rights. Americas Desk Chief Serdar Bashimov scolded the Charge for raising this issue in front of Meredov and called her for an immediate meeting on June 3 to discuss specific details. Bashimov maintains that there is no black list, and focused on writing a list of known citizens prevented from leaving Turkmenistan. Charge emphasized that nothing less than systemic, not cosmetic, changes are needed. Per reftel, embassy will demarche Minister Meredov again. End Summary.

By Any Name, Citizens Restricted from Travel

¶2. (C) Americas Desk Chief Serdar Bashimov denied the existence of a black list, but not travel restrictions for some Turkmenistani citizens during a June 2 meeting with Charge. Bashimov insisted on creating a list of known citizens denied departure as a first step toward resolving the freedom of movement issue. Charge countered that post does not want to see travel restrictions lifted for a few, but a transparent system developed to notify citizens they are restricted from travel and provide a process to petition for removal from the list. Bashimov did not/not deny that the current system functions like a de facto exit visa regime, and did not/not counter the fact that the State Service for Registration of Foreign Citizens (SSRF - Immigration) is powerless in providing constructive advice to citizens. Bashimov did not/not deny that the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and Ministry of National Security (MNB) were the law enforcement agencies responsible for placing and removing people from the black list.

Creating Black-listed Citizens List

¶3. (SBU) Post is working on creating the list of known citizens who have informed and/or petitioned the U.S. Embassy, U.K. Embassy and OSCE for assistance in resolving freedom of movement issues. This list will be reviewed and passed to the MFA as a good-faith effort to start the resolution process. OSCE's Human Dimension's officer Benjamin Moureau told PolOff on June 7 that he is willing to provide numbers of people who petitioned the OSCE for assistance with travel restrictions, but was reluctant to provide the complainants' names out of concern for their welfare vis a vis the government. U.K. Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Chris Bowden told PolOff on June 8 that the U.K. Embassy was only asked to intervene on one freedom of movement case.

Comment

¶4. (SBU) The MFA is aware of the Jackson) Vanik sanctions, and detailed information regarding the trade impact is being developed at post; a hollow threat will not carry much weight. International attention will be constructive, but the issue must reach beyond the MFA and the SSRF if changes will be made. As a step forward, Bashimov did not accuse all of the people being denied the right to travel as potential terrorists as was his past practice. End Comment.

BRUSH